

Serial No. 10/056,398
April 5, 2004
Page 8

REMARKS

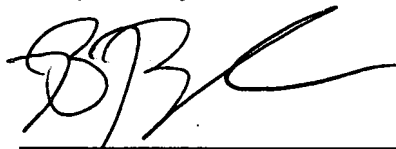
Claims 1-24 remain in this application, with Claims 16 and 17 amended. At the outset, the Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in all claims.

The Examiner objected to Claims 17-19 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(a) for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner identified an informality with Claim 17. The Applicants have amended Claim 17 to correct this informality, thereby obviating this ground of objection. The Applicants have also amended Claim 16 to correct a minor typographical error.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-24 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested, and a timely Notice of Allowability is solicited.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition the Commissioner for a one-month extension of time, extending to March 18, 2004, the period for response to the Office Action dated December 18, 2003. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account No. 50-0639.

Respectfully submitted,



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